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C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 001475

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO A/S KANSTEINER AND AF/S
NSC FOR AFRICA SR DIR JENDAYII FRAZER

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ZI](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: MDC RELATES MORE CONTACTS ABOUT DIALOGUE

Classified By: JOSEPH G. SULLIVAN FOR REASONS 1.5B/D

[11.](#) (C) Contacts with ZANU-PF: MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai and Secretary General Welshman Ncube told the

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Ambassador over lunch July 22 that Zanu-PF and the South African Government(SAG) had reached out to them recently. ZANU-PF Minister for Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Patrick Chinamasa had contacted Ncube to negotiate for the MDC's attendance/non-boycott of President Mugabe's July 22 speech opening the parliamentary session. The MDC had requested a number of concessions by ZANU-PF, including no arrests or harassment of its parliamentarians and freedom to campaign in late August urban council and parliamentary bi-elections. MDC received sufficient assurances by late July 21 to agree that its MP's and even Tsvangirai (a non-MP) would attend the session. The agreement came too late to affect ZANU-PF from blockading and preventing MDC from registering its local council candidates in a number of traditional ZANU-PF strongholds, but Tsvangirai was told that registration of candidates would be re-opened in these areas.

MDC is publicly characterizing its attendance at parliament as a goodwill gesture intended to facilitate dialogue and hopes privately that it can stimulate some positive steps toward dialogue on both sides. How delicate and top-centered ZANU is, however, was reflected when Speaker Mnangagwa had to call President Mugabe personally a few minutes before the parliamentary session to confirm that he should issue invitations to Tsvangirai, even though it was Chinamasa who had urged Tsvangirai to attend. Mugabe's speech was unremarkable and absent inflammatory rhetoric, although filled with delusions about the wonderful state of the Zimbabwean agriculture, tourism, etc.

[12.](#) (C) South African Outreach: According to Ncube, the South African High Commissioner has also been pressing MDC and ZANU-PF for more progress toward dialogue. The MDC told him it was ready for dialogue now without conditions. SAG HC Ndou also met with Minister for State Security Goche on this subject and Goche told Ncube on July 22 that he would be traveling to South Africa to meet with President Mbeki's people on the dialogue issue. Comment: The most encouraging part of the South African contacts is Goche sharing with Ncube about his upcoming meeting with the South Africans. End comment.

[13.](#) (C) MDC Plans: The MDC issued a statement July 22 on his openness to dialogue on issues of national emergency (text being faxed to AF/S). The intent is to make clear that the burden is on ZANU to address the national crisis by entering into dialogue. MDC will also work hard in late August's elections to demonstrate its firm hold on urban areas. MDC is working on for release in the next several months a platform of policies in order to demonstrate that it has economic and political proposals for a transition or post-election period. The MDC will continue its party-building activities and its training in non-violence, but has no mass action activities planned for the near term.

[14.](#) (C) Comment: The MDC was clearly thrown off balance by its failure to organize successful demonstrations in early June, but it appears to have recovered its equilibrium and to be pursuing a more patient course. ZANU-PF's triumphalism has begun to run itself out, as the country's economic and political crisis continues. Whether this is the sort of mutually hurting stalemate that can lead to successful dialogue/negotiations remains to be seen, since it requires not only the assent of many in ZANU-PF, but also of the ultimate hard-liner Robert Mugabe.

SULLIVAN